

Resolution in Support of Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies

WHEREAS, the leaders of 167 countries (including the United States) have agreed that any warming of the planet above 2°C (3.6°F) would be unsafe, and we have already (as of 2012) have raised the average surface temperature 0.8°C, causing far more damage than most scientists expected¹; and,

WHEREAS, this rapid temperature increase has exacerbated weather extremes including the intensification and/or the more frequent occurrence of hurricanes², tropical storms², heat waves³, floods⁴, droughts⁵, and wildfires⁶ and these extreme events have and will continue to negatively impact the U.S. economy. In 2012, the US accounted for 67% of the \$160 billion lost globally due to natural catastrophes; and,

WHEREAS, The current global effects of climate change include at least 150,000 annual deaths according to the World Health Organization⁷, and \$1.2 trillion in annual economic losses according to the Climate Vulnerable Forum⁸; and Fossil fuels negatively impact human health via toxic pollutants, with a recent estimate of \$345 billion per year in the United States alone due to coal extraction and burning; and,

WHEREAS, according to the Carbon Tracker Institute, the proven coal, oil, and gas reserves of the top 200 fossil-fuel companies, and countries (e.g. Venezuela or Kuwait) which function similarly to fossil-fuel companies, equals about 2,795 gigatons of CO₂, or five times the amount we can release to maintain a 2°C limit of planetary warming⁹; and,

WHEREAS, the conditions resulting from climate change often disproportionately affect those who are marginalized, including low-income communities and communities of color—who have done the least to cause it and often have the least access to the tools to combat it-- and as a University we must ensure social and environmental justice by doing all we can to mitigate climate change and its impacts¹⁰; and,

¹ <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf>

² "Climate Change and Sandy", 15 Nov 2012. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/earth/climate-change-sandy.html>

³ "Global Warming has increased Monthly Heat Records Worldwide by a Factor of Five, Study Finds", 14 Jan 2013. <http://sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/01/120114101732.htm>

⁴ "In Weather Chaos, a Case for Global Warming", 14 August 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/science/earth/15climate.html>

⁵ "What we know about climate change and drought", 24 July 2012. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/07/24/what-we-know-about-climate-change-and-drought/>

⁶ "Climate change will boost Lumber of West's wildfires", 12 Jun 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/12/us-climate-wildfires-idUSBRE85B09420120612>

⁷ <http://www.who.int/heli/risks/climate/climatechange/en/>

⁸ "Climate Change Reducing Global GDP by \$1.2 Trillion", 26 Sep 2012. <http://www.businessweek.com/news/>

⁹ <http://www.carbontracker.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/08/Unburnable-Carbon-Full1.pdf>

¹⁰ http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/documents/The_Climate_Gap_Full_Report_FINAL.pdf

WHEREAS, the fossil fuel industry has forcefully constructed itself as a lobbying superpower to preserve the current status quo of burning fossil fuels, spending \$179 million in 2011 alone to ensure the failure of legislation designed to fight climate change¹¹; and,

WHEREAS, numerous financial experts have concluded that it is possible to divest from fossil fuels and still earn strong returns and an industry study by Aperio Investment Management found that the theoretical risk to return from fossil fuel divestment is .0044%⁹; and,

WHEREAS, the University of California San Diego (UCSD) mission statement includes the commitment “to advance the health and well-being of our region, state, nation and the world”¹²; and,

WHEREAS, Associated Students UCSD has endorsed resolutions that support people’s right to a clean environment; and,

WHEREAS, a multitude of college campus have already introduced and passed resolutions through their Associated Student calling for the divestment from fossil fuels, including the University of California Santa Barbara and University of California Berkeley; and,

WHEREAS, Hampshire College, Sterling College, and Middlebury College Board of Trustees have already committed to divesting from fossil fuels; and,

WHEREAS, The University of California has affirmed its commitment to, “responsible stewardship of resources and to demonstrating leadership in sustainable business practices”, and to having a “net zero impact on the Earth’s climate”¹³; and

WHEREAS, The University of California currently has investments in the fossil fuels industry, including coal mining and burning, petroleum extraction, and natural gas extraction; and

WHEREAS, By divesting from Sudan, South Africa, and tobacco, the University of California has demonstrated the view that in holding investments in an industry, the institution is partially accountable for the impacts of the decisions and actions of said industry; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Associated Students of UC San Diego call upon the Regents of the University of California, in its commitment to leadership in sustainability, to take the following actions regarding the General Endowment Pool:

- 1 Instruct asset managers to stop any new investment in fossil fuel companies; and

¹¹ <http://blueocean.org/issues/opposition-to-clean-energy/>

¹² <http://www.ucsd.edu/explore/about/index.html>

¹³ “Sustainable Practices Policy”. <http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/coordrev/policy/sustainable-practices-policy.pdf>

- 2 Take appropriate steps to ensure that, within 5 years, none of its directly held or commingled assets include holdings in fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds determined by the Carbon Tracker list; and
- 3 Release quarterly updates, both detailing progress made towards full divestment and providing information on the holdings of the endowment pool and of index funds within the GEP.

Sponsors:

Andrew Buselt, Muir College Senator

Vanessa Garcia, AVP of Environmental and Social Justice Affairs